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ABSTRACT

This essay traces the development of music in the public school curriculum and focuses on the Goals 2000 emphasis on music in life. Music has been a part of the high school curriculum since the Boston school system accepted it in 1838. While music education for much of this century has had difficulties defining itself and its role in the curriculum, Goals 2000 validates music education as a major part of the life of the U.S. community. Music teachers now can explore the potential of involving students in unprecedented opportunities for musical growth and human development. Essay topics include: (1) the community connection; (2) the emerging gap; (3) a new justification; (4) on the threshold; (5) entering the mainstream; (6) the emerging curriculum; and (7) embracing the future. (EH)

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MUSIC IN EDUCATION: TOWARD THE MAINSTREAM

BY

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Music in Education: Toward the Mainstream

Abstract:

Music has been part of the American high school curriculum since the Boston school system accepted it in 1838. While music education for much of this century has had difficulties defining itself and its role in the curriculum, Goals 2000 validates music education as a major part of the life of the American community. Music teachers can now explore the potential of involving students in unprecedented opportunities for musical growth and human development.

In the mid-1830s, the Boston School Committee considered adding a subject to the curriculum. Their deliberations concerned whether the existing curriculum, which focused on subjects with utilitarian value, should be modified to include a subject whose qualities were, at best, obscure. The community's economic, political, and educational interests added their input and, in the fall of 1837, the Committee decided that

> ... the experiment be tried of introducing instruction in vocal music ... into the public schools of the city. (Birge, p. 49)

Music would become the first expressive subject to be included in the curriculum of a public school system in the United States. How would the community, teachers, and students respond? In May 1838, the mayor of Boston requested that the Hawes School, the site of the experiment, submit a report. The school responded that

> ... enough has ... been already accomplished, to warrant the belief of the great utility of vocal music as a branch of public instruction. ... We trust that it will not be long before vocal music will be everywhere an essential branch of public instruction. (Birge, pp. 50, 52)

Based on this assessment of the utilitarian value of music instruction, America's first contractual agreement between a school board and a music teacher was reached. In 1838, students in Boston received instruction in music from a contracted music teacher as part of their instructional program.

The Boston Committee believed that the study of music would be good for students' mind, body, and spirit. This decision provided direction for the future of music education in two areas. Music would be an integral part of school curriculum, and the music curriculum would be vocal music (singing).

The mind-body-spirit rationale sparked the inclusion of music in the curricula of other communities. Within 15 years Buffalo, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Chicago, Cleveland, San Francisco, and St. Louis had added music to their curricula. A "cutting edge" school in the 19th century had to include vocal music instruction in its curriculum.

THE COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Since the inception of public schools in the United States, a school's curriculum has been shaped by community. Consequently, when the definition of "community" changes, the curriculum changes. When a local community is affected by the national community, such as during WWII, the local curriculum is adjusted to accommodate the broader interests, needs, and agendas of the national community.

Certain areas of the curriculum have remained in favor, however, even as the definitions of community have changed. Few question the importance of reading, writing, and arithmetic as meaningful educational experiences, but other subjects, such as music, have not been so fortunate. Why? What has happened to music in the curriculum since the 1830s? What is the potential of music instruction to contribute to young people's education? Where might music in education go?

THE EMERGING GAP

The mind-body-spirit rationale for public school music instruction prevailed through the last half of the 1800s and into the 20th century. Many observers in this century, however, began to question a rationale that came from the cultural norms of the 1830s. Was that rationale an appropriate justification for including music in the curriculum for the middle of the 20th century?

A cultural gap between rationale and reality was creating major issues relating to music in the curriculum. Instruction in music, as in other arts that had come to be included, was frequently a target for reduction or elimination. Given changes in economics, enrollment, structure, and politics, areas of curriculum appearing as less meaningful (i.e., of less community value) were often the first to be elimin-

ated. Sputnik goes up and emphasis on science and math goes up. Resources are shifted to curricular areas whose contributions to perceived problems demand immediate attention.

Increasingly, arts educators and organizations were proclaiming that the curriculum was being held hostage. Their feelings might have been expressed as "We say as educators that we are concerned with the total education of students, yet we continually adjust the curriculum to however the wind blows. We are losing our focus! We need to maintain a curriculum that provides educational experiences to meet the total needs of students. Adjust content, yes; curriculum, no. We need a broad based curriculum that includes music and all of the arts as well as experiences with all subject areas. Otherwise it is not fair to our students!"

By the 1950s, the mind-body-spirit rationale supporting music in the curriculum was falling on deaf ears. The fast-changing, complex, diverse society of the mid-20th century, and the curriculum designed to serve it, increasingly appeared to find little or no use for a subject that was included because it developed mind, body, and spirit. Society valued music outside school, yet keeping it in the curriculum was becoming increasingly more difficult. Music educators needed to re-examine the question asked in 1837. Why should music be in the curriculum? What could replace the mind-body-spirit basis?

A NEW JUSTIFICATION

Aesthetic education offered music educators an alternative to mind-body-spirit. Based on philosophical writings and discussions regarding the nature, meaning, and purpose of art, a movement emerged in the mid-1950s that provided a new rationale for including music and other arts in the curriculum. The new thinking held that students needed systematic instruction in aesthetics to enhance their capabilities to perceive, respond to, and value the cultural artifacts of past and present civilizations. Music will foster their humanness as it equips them to formulate and sustain values.

Aesthetic education increasingly came to serve as the post-1950s basis for including music in the curriculum. Instructional materials, workshops, and education programs helped teachers develop and implement instructional strategies based on the inherent characteristics and expressive qualities of music. This internal focus on the conditions that embody expressive qualities was a major change from mind-body-spirit. The need now was to study *and* experience, not merely to experience.

The aesthetic rationale supported the beliefs, and yes, the needs of music educators. After being repeatedly hammered regarding the "uselessness" of music instruction, they could say, "Our subject, as in math, English, and reading, has clearly defined and teachable content. We have strategies and developmental processes guiding instruction. It is of value for students. We belong in today's curriculum." Music teachers knew they had much to offer young people, but they were having difficulty convincing others, including school boards, of the aesthetic rationale. From the '50s into the '90s, the question from the 1830s begged for a new answer. Why include music in the curriculum? The gap between community and maintaining music as a part of 20th century education, though narrower, remained.

In this last decade of the 20th century, change is reaching across the globe and altering the definition of community that decides about and drives curriculum development and implementation. Where is music instruction relative to the evolving definition of community in the 1990s?

ON THE THRESHOLD

The Goals 2000: Educate America Act is in part a national response to two emerging needs: the need to define community and the need to define education for the good of community. Goals 2000 recognizes that the definition of community constantly changes. A once local and perhaps regional definition is becoming national and global. Through technology, people from widely-dispersed areas can interact and form a new community capable of – and often desirous of – influencing and determining issues. Curriculum is one of those issues.

The changing definition of community requires as well a redefining of education to reflect a wider concept of community than ever before – a redefinition that is too important to be prescribed by parochial interests. Goals 2000 speaks to a broad concept of education for the new and emerging American community. In the third of six Goals,

> ... By the year 2000, all students will leave grades 4, 8, and 12 having demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter including English, mathematics, science, foreign language, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography, and every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our Nation's modern economy ....

Almost 160 years after Boston, arts instruction is finally being recognized as having value sufficient for inclusion in the core of instruction. This statement reflects awareness that students should be involved in a curriculum that acknowledges learning through a more diverse system than is now offered. It reflects that the knowledge, understanding, skills, and attitudes desired by graduating students develop through a wide range of curricular opportunities. It recognizes the elastic needs of the constantly redefining American community.

> If we find that the type of genius prevalent in young countries like America ... tends to the practical, inventive, scientific, executive kinds rather than to the painter of pictures or poems, the carver of statues or words, we must understand that each age ... elicits some types of ability rather than others in its pursuit of environmental control. (Durant and Durant, p. 98)

Goals 2000 challenges the arts to make contributions as never before, to perhaps even exceed the expectation of the idealistic pronouncements of the past. Regardless of the reasons for the inclusion, they are in the core. What is next? Are they ready to meet revised community and curricular expectations?

ENTERING THE MAINSTREAM

Thanks to Goals 2000, music educators can now worry less about being *in* the curriculum and concentrate on what they should and can *do* in the curriculum.

For years we have been proclaiming that students involved in music instruction develop qualities and characteristics beyond those who don't participate. Music educators can now contribute to the national community in a manner unique to their discipline. At the same time, they will be uniquely challenged to meet the enormous responsibilities with which they have been entrusted.

By the late 19th century, most American schools reflected characteristics influenced by the Boston decision. Vocal music, the glee club in particular, was an important part of school. This curriculum of performance-based singing was augmented with piano instruction, player pianos, and the Victrola. The success of music instruction was measured by a student's ability to perform.

Instrumental music in the curriculum expanded in the years around WWI. Many town bands, often organized during the Civil War, continued after the war. Band members teaching citizens was a great impetus for including instrumental music in the curriculum. Popular touring ensembles such as those led by John Philip Sousa and Arthur Pryor contributed to the addition of instrumental music to the curriculum.

During the 1920s and 1930s, instrumental and vocal music organizations and instruction developed many of today's materials, methods, models, procedures, and practices. Band uniforms reflect the military models of this period, while the robes of many school choirs reflect the influence of sacred choral music from the same period. Band and orchestra instrumentation and choir voicings were clarified. While a secondary music curriculum in the mid-1930s might include music appreciation, theory, history, piano, and private instruction in voice and instruments, most secondary students received music instruction by participating in performances of symphonic, concert, marching, and pep bands; a cappella, mixed, chamber, girls, and boys choirs; and symphonic or string orchestras.

Music education in today's secondary schools has changed little from the 1930s and, while today's music *curriculum* is in many respects far from that of the 1930s, most changes appear to be *about* curriculum rather than *of* curriculum. New materials and/or new music, new mixings of old groups (wind ensemble, jazz band, show choir), and technologies that use videos, CDs, computers, and electronic keyboards are finding new ways to do essentially the same old thing.

Goals 2000 now challenges schools and music educators to make changes *of* the curriculum:

- Meeting the instructional needs of students apart from performance
- Engaging *all* students in developing individual musical values
- Delivering music instruction in varied settings
- Stressing music as an integral characteristic of all instruction
- Involving students in creative musical involvement that includes reflection and reaction
- Viewing music instruction as part of the secondary school curriculum
- Developing and implementing assessment consistent with the nature of the discipline.

These changes *of* the music curriculum begin to get at the heart of instruction *in* music. Curriculum takes on new life!

THE EMERGING CURRICULUM

The Comprehensive Musicianship Program (CMP) is a program *of* curricular change that was developed in the 1960s.[1] Recognizing that the music curriculum was performance oriented, music educators developed strategies to engage students as performers, listeners, and composers. Students involved in CMP based instructional programs were expected to produce music and expand their capabilities to reflect and react.

CMP based music instruction achieved, unfortunately, only limited success. Teachers, including those in higher education, were ill-prepared for or resistant to instructional changes and materials, while strategies were unavailable, limited, or ill-conceived. (Do these sound familiar!) The hoped-for revolution in the music curriculum never happened.

Some aspects of CMP remain, however, as in this example of a performance ensemble studying a composition. Traditionally, a teacher would instruct the ensemble in how to play what, when, and under what conditions: "Trumpets, mark your music. Measures 10–24 are *ff*; the next four measures are softer. OK, let's do it right." With a CMP approach, the teacher asks the trumpets to "Perform measures 10–28. When you finish, I'm going to ask you what dynamic changes you could make to have a more expressive performance." Observing students might be asked to react as listeners: "Critique their performance in terms of dynamic contrast. Is it varied enough? Why? Why not?" Students might also be challenged as composers: "For the next class period, compose an eight measure melody in a style similar to that of the composer we are studying. Be prepared to perform it in class."

In these examples, learning music is different from learning to perform. Students are expected to make individual and collective musical decisions apart from the teacher's direction. This broad, more comprehensive student-centered approach will in turn lead to students perceiving music teaching and instruction differently. This gains in importance as we remember that today's students are tomorrow's teachers.[2]

Music instruction can encourage connections between generations, for people are involved in music throughout their lives. Community, religious, and service organizations provide musical outlets and opportunities for people of all ages to learn music, participate, and experience growth. These also have the potential to enhance student growth, both musically and socially.

Traditional patterns of scheduling music in school, such as having classes meet when they fit the needs of students, teachers, or the schedule, could be modified to accommodate a local adult group. High school students and adults could interact in intergenerational experiences that would provide all participants with opportunities to grow and develop musically and socially. High schoolers could experience musical maturity, commitment, wisdom, and life in general. Older individuals could experience the energy, enthusiasm, and questions of youth as well as be mentors, musical and otherwise. This could encourage individuals to

1. Discipline Based Music Education is a contemporary program that has a relationship with CMP. It is more evident in art instruction than in music education at this time.

2. For more information, contact James Wharton, Music Teacher, Catonsville High School, Bloomsbury Avenue and Rolling Road, Catonsville, MD 21228.

participate in school ensemble performances regardless of schedules. Retired musicians are available, and their participation should be encouraged.

A music teacher can structure learning so that both high schoolers and adults grow in musical interdependence through experiences such as, "During the next 30 minutes, learn the music on pages 8–15. Be prepared to perform it with accurate tempo, dynamic contrast, and stylistic accuracy. Others will critique your performance and suggest improvements." Bring adults into classes! Opportunities for cooperative learning, think-pair-share, musical modeling, and social growth can expand far beyond what traditional scheduling can offer. The new music curriculum encourages new systems for delivering life long experinces.[3]

Issues in instructing non-performing secondary students (music teachers who are ill-prepared or lack the desire to teach general students, lack of materials, uncertainty regarding what general students should learn, etc.) provide some of the challenges that music educators will face as they implement Goals 2000.

Computers and related musical technologies are emerging as powerful tools that can meet the needs and interests of all students, especially non-performing students. Students are often interested in technology and are generally highly interested in music; many music teachers are technojunkies. Courses with computers and Musical Instruments Digital Interface (MIDI) technology can help students create and perform music in ways never possible before.

A teacher might ask a techno music class to "Create a 32-measure composition in ABA form that has an introduction and a coda. Be prepared to demonstrate your work using a sound portfolio. Maintain a log of your ideas and changes and describe why and how you made each change. You will be asked to name your composition and share with the class."

Throughout the composing process students make value judgments about music and shape patterns that help express who they are. Technology enables all students to experience the power and process of musical involvement without requiring high levels of musical skill or knowledge. These in turn often become outgrowths of the process.[4]

Redirected emphasis in instruction and scheduling, new strategies for performing ensembles, and increasing use of technology for general students are some of the areas toward which music education is moving to fulfill the challenge of Goals 2000. There is also new emphasis on providing instruction for performance that involves a wider range of outcomes and for meeting the needs of nonperforming students in a musically centered, experientially based instructional setting. The materials and the technology exist, the teachers are emerging, the students are ready, and the time – at long last! – is at hand.

3. For information, contact Richard Disharoon, Music Teacher, Pikesville High School, 7621 Labyrinth Road, Baltimore, MD 21208.

4. For information, contact Austin Buffum, Music Teacher, Capistrano Unified School District, 32972 Calle Perfecto, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675 or Anne D. Modugno, Music Teacher, 126 Hunting Ridge Road, Stamford, CT 06903.

EMBRACING THE FUTURE

Since the late 1970s 35 states have created a high school graduation requirement in the Fine Arts. This is a step toward Goals 2000's "of the curriculum" changes, in spite of problems such as a diversity of interpretations of "Fine Art" that some students may receive credit for wood shop or hair styling while others are doing research at an art museum.

Music and performance will continue as part of the secondary curriculum. How it does this, however, will – *must* – change to reflect the changing nature of community.

We hope that music directors don't hang on to the 1830s Boston concept of music at the expense of understanding that though the means may change, the end remains the same: To help every student fulfill his or her musical and human potential.

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